Czech → English

A Handful: Flying Tigers / 飛虎隊

For our game Hrstka, we are preparing the "Flying Tigers" expansion, which focuses on the 1st American Volunteer Group (AVG), known as the "Flying Tigers" (Chinese: "fēi hǔ duì"). During World War II, it flew in Burma and southern China and was composed of American fighter pilots who, with the tacit consent of the American government, fought in the ranks of the Chinese Air Force against Japanese aggression. The expansion should offer a story campaign with missions based on authentic missions that the group actually flew and air battles that it fought in the mystical Orient.

Players and their AVG pilots face a new enemy - the Imperial Japanese Army Air Force, which is significantly different from the opponents Allied pilots encountered in Europe and North Africa. We would like to offer you a glimpse into this new enemy, the new rules this side has, and one Japanese fighter.

Imperial Japanese Army Air Force

(Dai-Nippon teikoku rikogun kokutai)

The Japanese Air Force entered the war with a highly skilled force of pilots, each having been trained for nearly 30 months and having logged 400 hours of flight time (far more than the Allied pilots). As losses mounted, however, their training program was unable to train replacements quickly enough, and the quality of the new arrivals declined sharply. Over Burma and southern China, however, Allied pilots encountered elite pilots and veterans of the war in China (which had been going on for three years by the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor).

Organization

The basic combat unit of the Imperial Army (and Navy) Air Force was *the Hikō Sentai,* usually shortened to just **Sentai** (" Air Combat Group"). It was usually commanded by a Shō- *sa (* major) or Chu- *sa (* lieutenant colonel). *The Sentai* consisted of three chutai **(squadrons**), commanded by a Tai-i *(* captain). Each chutai *consisted of* three shotai **(squadrons**) , each with 3 aircraft. Together with reserve aircraft and the command squadron, the Sentai *usually* had a combat strength of 45 fighters (in the case of a fighter squadron) or 30 bombers (for a bomber squadron).

Two or more *Sentai (* often as a fighter group, bomber

Longshi
An online bimonthly magazine about RPG games

Latest articles
All issues
Authors
Tags
Series
How to contribute?
Editorial staff

group, or ground support group) together formed **a Hikodan** (equivalent to a wing in the USAAF), commanded by a Tai- *sa (* colonel). Two or three *Hikodan then* formed **a Hikoshidan (Air Division**), commanded by a general.

In Southeast Asia, *the 3rd Hikoshidan* under General Michio Sugawara and three detached Sentai *from General Hideyoshi Obata's 5th Hikoshidan* (which had meanwhile been deployed against the Philippines) were deployed against Malaya. Until 23 December 1942, no Japanese aircraft were seen over Rangoon, due to the resistance put up by the British defenders in Malaya. Only when the situation there turned in the Japanese favour was General Sugawara able to shift some of his forces to the Burma front. With the occupation of Malaya and Singapore in mid-January, the 3rd *Hikoshidan's* shifted to the Dutch East Indies, and the remainder of the 5th Hikoshidan (*which* had regrouped in Taiwan after its deployment in the Philippines) moved to Thai airfields and joined its remaining Sentai to launch *the main* air offensive against Burma.

Tactics

Shotai (three aircraft) used a three-aircraft formation similar to the "V formation" used by other countries at the time - in the form of one leading aircraft and a pair of wingmen. However, the Japanese version was more flexible than the standard "V formation". The two accompanying aircraft kept a greater distance from the leading aircraft and could flexibly change the formation. Japanese pilots trained long and hard to master the formation and be able to hold it even during fierce battles. Some even claimed to have developed *an ishin denshin (* sixth sense) for what the other pilots would do and were able to fly with masterful synchronization. However, such interplay required long training and experience. Otherwise, the three-aircraft formation was more of a hindrance than a help, and the pilots had to do their best to maintain it in combat.

The Japanese also used larger formations in combat - an entire *chūtai* (i.e. three shotai) could fly together in a large V-shaped formation. A double formation (i.e. 18 aircraft) was called *a daitāi,* but maintaining it in combat (often without radios, see below) was basically impossible.

Communication

Bomber and reconnaissance aircraft usually used radiotelegraphs, which they used to communicate using Morse code. However, this was not acceptable for a fast fighter duel, so in the 1930s the Japanese began to install radios in their aircraft. However, they were faulty and often failed during missions, and the crews often had to do without them. Some units then removed them altogether to lighten the aircraft. Pilots gradually became masters of communicating using hand signals, flapping wings, and pre-arranged meanings of multi-colored flares fired from the cockpit, as well as the aforementioned sixth sense for what others would do.

Action

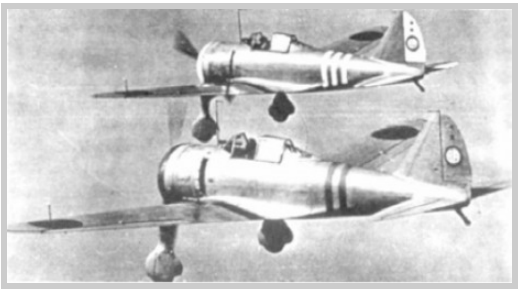
ACTION

Japanese pilots have two new actions available:

- **Sanbutai (** English "sanbutai", Japanese "three")

> As mentioned above, Japanese pilots flew in threes rather than in pairs (as the normal *wingman action allows)* , so they cannot use the basic *wingman* from the main book, instead they have *the sanbutai* .
>
> Up to two pilots can choose this action to accompany one lead aircraft (a total of three aircraft, two of which take *the sanbutai action,* thus forming one *shotai*). The lead aircraft can take its own actions while the two pilots take *the sanbutai action to cover* it . The action (as with the "wingman" action) lasts only one round. If the pilots want to maintain the formation for a long time, they must take this action repeatedly.
>
> *If the lead pilot hooks up behind an enemy and has members of his shotai* (pilots who perform *the sanbutai action)* behind him , then he has a +4 bonus to his shooting (+2 for each aircraft, with the hookup bonus and both escort aircraft for a total of +9). If the pilot hooks up behind an aircraft that has escort aircraft behind him, on the other hand, his shooting is reduced by 2 for each aircraft (so in the case of both aircraft, not a +5 hookup bonus, but only +1), because he has to guard a total of three aircraft (not just one).
>
> Both a fighter and a bomber can have two planes accompanying it (together forming *a "shotai"*). In the case of a bomber, the accompanying planes do not give a bonus to firepower, they only reduce the firepower bonus of the attacker that latches onto it.
>
> If pilots are following a leading aircraft that is gaining altitude, their aircraft also gain an altitude token (as if they were climbing themselves). Similarly, if a pilot is attached to an opponent that is gaining altitude, they also gain an altitude token because they are following closely behind. Conversely, if a wingman is following an aircraft that is using (and therefore losing) an altitude token (and has altitude tokens of their own), then they do not lose any.

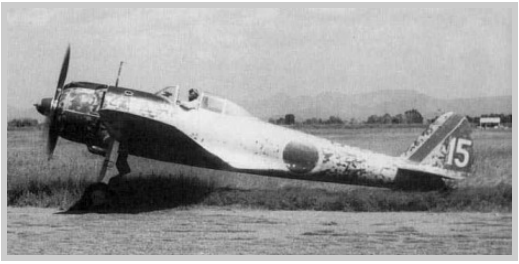
- **Jibaku (** English "jibaku")



> "Tennó heika banzai!"
>
> Japanese pilots were expected to die in samurai style when they crashed into an enemy aircraft, ship, or other target... and take as many enemies with them as they could. If a Japanese aircraft **had used up all its ammunition,** or was **damaged and was** in danger of not being able to complete the mission, it could
>
> attempt to ram its own aircraft into the enemy, destroying both aircraft. In such a case, the outcome of this action would be decided by two Piloting rolls - the Japanese pilot would have a -2 penalty and the attacked pilot would roll his Piloting against him. If the Japanese pilot failed both rolls, then the enemy had escaped and, in addition, failed to equalize the collision course and crashed into the ground with the aircraft. If he succeeded in one roll, then he had partially succeeded and damaged the

enemy at the cost of destroying his own aircraft (the enemy takes 1 Damage). If the Japanese pilot succeeded in both rolls, both aircraft were destroyed.

Aircraft (fighters)



Nakajima Ki-43 Hayabusa (Japanese for "Peregrine Falcon") / Allied designation " **Oscar"**

A single-engine fighter that took off from land bases and was the main type of fighter aircraft of the Imperial Japanese Army Air Force during World War II (first operational deployment in October 1941). A total of 30 sentai and 12 independent chūtai were armed with it. The "Oscar" was very popular among pilots for its maneuverability and pleasant handling. It was very agile and could easily outmaneuver opponents, but it had the same weaknesses as its predecessor, the Ki-27 "Nate" and its naval counterpart, the A6M "Zero" - weak armor and the absence of self-sealing fuel tanks caused heavy losses in combat, and its armament of only two machine guns proved insufficient against heavily armored Allied aircraft.

Special rules:

- The plane has 10 ammo squares.
- **Agile –** The aircraft is very agile, with a +2 bonus **to Piloting .**
- **Weak Armament –** The aircraft is armed with only a pair of machine guns and the damage inflicted on the enemy is often not serious. It has a **−2 penalty to Shooting .**
- **Burns Easily** – The aircraft lacks armor and is very fragile. If the result of the successful roll that damaged it was even (Japanese: *cho*), then the aircraft is shot down. If it is even (Japanese: *han*), then it simply takes damage as normal.